

The Honorable Michael K. Powell
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Powell:

I'm writing to urge you to support the proposed merger between EchoStar Communications and Hughes Electronics. I believe the merger holds tremendous potential for my company in Redondo Beach, CA which sells EchoStar's DISH Network satellite TV service.

If the merger is approved, the new company will be able to offer local broadcast stations to all 210 of the nation's television markets. Currently, EchoStar offers service in only 36 markets. This is possible because both EchoStar and DIRECTV currently duplicate hundreds of channels of identical programming. By combining their limited spectrum, the new company will become a fully competitive cable alternative in every television market in the country.

This merger will provide consumers across the country with an affordable high-speed Internet access service provider because broadband via satellite can reach areas of the country cable and DSL wires do not. This is rural Americas only realistic hope for affordable broadband service. The new company will also provide much needed competition to cable and DSL where high speed Internet access service is already available.

The merger will allow the new company to better compete with cable. This is good for all consumers because subscribers to the new service will benefit from the competition on price and services whether or not they are served by cable.

As a owner of a High Definition Television Reciever, I was led to believe by my goverment that High Definition Television (HDTV) was supposed to be available to the American public today, but consumers are still waiting for broadcasters and cable operators to provide the service. EchoStar and Hughes have pledged to use some of the available spectrum to increase their HDTV channel offerings, more than tripling their current HDTV offerings. I am excited because greater availability of HDTV programming will translate into more viewing opportunities for me and other owner of HDTV televisions.

Please support the merger between EchoStar Communications Corporation and Hughes Electronics. There are many benefits of the merger, but I believe that most importantly, the new company will increase competition with cable and help hold down cable rate increases. These savings, in turn, will be passed along to consumers.

Sincerely,

William Raffa
2421 Burritt Ave
Redondo Beach, CA 90278